

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 3, 2016

TO: Steven Stokes, Technical Director  
FROM: Dermot Winters, WIPP Cognizant Engineer  
SUBJECT: Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Activity Report for May 2016

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** D. Winters was onsite for closeout of the DSA, Revision 5, Implementation Validation Review (IVR) and the start of the Interim Ventilation System (IVS) Contractor Readiness Assessment (CRA) during May 16-22. R. Quirk and T. Battaglia were onsite performing site-representative-like duties and to observe completion of the IVS CRA during May 23-27. Oversight has averaged 2.2 man-weeks per month during FY 2016.

**DSA Revision 5 Implementation Validation Review (IVR).** The staff observed the Nuclear Waste Partnership (NWP) DSA, Rev. 5, IVR outbrief on May 19. There were 51 findings, 20 of which were closed during the IVR. NWP worked to close open items during the remainder of the month and declared DSA Rev. 5 implemented at 0001 on May 30. Cold operations conducted to the requirements flowing from DSA Rev. 5 are expected to begin June 1 and continue for 8 weeks. The staff will assess NWP progress in establishing consistency with the DSA Rev. 5 requirements during cold operations.

**Interim Ventilation System (IVS) Contractor Readiness Assessment (CRS).** The IVS CRA, begun on May 20, concluded on May 26 and was outbriefed on May 26. It was conducted against the safety basis requirements of Revision 4 of the WIPP DSA supplemented by a consolidated Evaluation of the Safety of the Situation (cESS). The CRA team was shadowed by a Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Line Management Assessment (LMA) team. The CRA team identified 19 findings, including 16 prestarts. The team concluded that worker knowledge deficiencies and the imminence of implementation of Rev. 5 of the DSA precluded recommending startup under the safety basis under which the CRA was conducted.

Their conclusion was consistent with CBFO direction that prior to giving approval to start the CRA, that NWP complete an IVS-specific IVR addressing the differences between IVS operation under the prior safety basis vs DSA Rev. 5—a requirement imposed because the DSA Rev. 5 IVR intentionally excluded IVS operations. The staff is tracking closure of the CRA findings and will assess the IVS-specific IVR.

**Ground Control.** A report by the consulting firm, RESPEC, emphasized the seriousness of deteriorating ground conditions and need for increased airflow to allow ground control work to be accelerated. During May 16-17 the staff discussed the report with cognizant contractor personnel and inspected areas of report concern in the underground. The following week, a roof bolt base plate fell in a frequently occupied area. The event further emphasized the need for sufficient ventilation air flow to allow an acceleration of ground control work. The staff continues to track ground control issues.